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TIKTOK AS A TOOL FOR ENGLISH TEACHER DIGITAL COMPETENCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the way English language teachers use TikTok as a platform for developing digital competence and creating educational content. The study aims to reveal the pedagogical purposes, content formats, and levels of digital competence demonstrated in teacher-generated TikTok videos. A descriptive qualitative design was employed to analyse 111

videos published under English-teaching-related hashtags. Using an observation checklist based on the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu), the videos were classified by instructional purpose, format, and technological sophistication. The findings indicate that reflective and personal content predominates, revealing teachers' tendency to use TikTok for professional self-expression and informal learning rather than structured instruction. Vlogs were identified as the dominant format, reflecting teachers' preference for authentic, narrative-style communication that humanises the teaching profession. Most creators demonstrate an intermediate level of digital competence, confidently using the platform's basic features but rarely applying advanced editing or AI design strategies. The study concludes that TikTok enhances teachers' digital, communicative, and creative competencies. However, its interactive and assessment-oriented potential remains underused. The paper highlights the need for targeted professional development to support educators in transforming social media into a strategic environment for innovative teaching and the growth of digital literacy.

Keywords: content creation; digital competence; English teachers; microlearning; TikTok

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INTRODUCTION

Digitalization, as a sociocultural phenomenon of modern times, has become one of the driving forces behind the development of most spheres of social life, including education (Mospan et al., 2022; Mospan, 2023). The issue of digital transformation in education has become particularly relevant after Ukraine signed the Agreement on Participation in the EU Digital Europe Programme (2021–2027), which provides for the development of digital infrastructure, the support of innovative educational practices, and the enhancement of citizens' digital

competencies (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, 2020). The quality and sophistication of learning forms, mechanisms, and tools determine the level of professional training, mastery, and competence of future specialists. Accordingly, education must be one of the most progressive sectors in the country, capable of training qualified professionals with a high level of expertise and a set of positive personal qualities (Kovalchuk et al., 2018).

Therefore, there is a need for competent professionals who possess a variety of digital educational tools and can use them appropriately and effectively in their professional teaching practice. Pedagogical digital competence is defined as “the ability to consistently apply attitudes, knowledge, and skills required to plan, conduct, evaluate, and revise ICT-supported teaching” (From, 2017). In the context of education digitalisation, based on the European Framework DigCompEdu, the Framework of Digital Competence for Teaching and Academic Staff has been developed. It describes five levels of teachers’ digital competence, defined by analogy with the levels of foreign language proficiency: from A1 (beginner) to C (leader-innovator) (Conceptual and Reference Framework for Digital Competence of Educators, 2021)

Digital competence is a crucial professional skill for modern teachers, involving confident and critical use of digital technologies across educational contexts. The research highlights that digital competence requires teachers to logically use digital technologies across professional activities (Henseruk, 2021), develop continuous learning and adaptability in digital

environments (Bidyuk et al., 2023), and integrate digital tools for innovative teaching (Bilyakovska et al., 2024).

The rise of digital pedagogy has led to the emergence of new learning formats, such as microlearning and social video platforms. Considering the data from Statistic Brain, which indicates a decrease in human attention span over the past 15 years from 12 to 8.25 seconds (Kokoulina, 2020), microlearning can be viewed as an effective form of lifelong learning, particularly for practising educators in educational institutions. (Lytvynova, 2021).

Although numerous attempts have been made to define microlearning, there is still no single, universally accepted definition (Wang et al., 2021). The concept is often associated with eLearning, mobile learning, and informal learning (Fidan, 2023). Some researchers regard it as a form of eLearning (Zhang & West, 2020), others as its successor (Javorcik et al., 2023), or as one of the methods within eLearning designed to maintain the focus and purpose of learning activities (Salleh et al., 2022).

Typical examples of microlearning include a three-minute video explaining new software features, a short grammar quiz for quick practice, or digital flashcards that introduce daily vocabulary – each intended to deliver concise, actionable knowledge in easily digestible segments. Despite differences across definitions, research consistently highlights that the essence of microlearning lies in providing small, focused learning units that address specific educational goals (Monib et al., 2024)

Social media platforms, including TikTok, can support English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning and boost students' enthusiasm and language proficiency. As a popular video platform, TikTok offers a powerful microlearning space for highly engaging, bite-sized educational content across multiple disciplines. It can be utilised as an educational tool with its editing features, short video format, and customisation options (Meliana & Seli, 2023). The platform's primary strengths are brevity, accessibility, and alignment with digital generation learning preferences. TikTok offers unique educational opportunities across various disciplines, including language learning, creative education, and skill development.

Multiple studies demonstrate the effectiveness of TikTok, namely its ability to deliver learning units in under 60 seconds (Zuheir et al., 2021) and significant improvements in mathematics achievement using TikTok-based microlearning (Magbago et al., 2025).

The platform's educational potential is substantiated by research showing high student engagement: Lamimi et al. (2024) found that perceived usefulness and ease of use significantly influence learning intentions, and Meliana et al. (2023) confirmed microlearning's success in language education.

Critically, Conde-Caballero et al. (2023) reported high satisfaction and technology acceptance across different

educational contexts, suggesting TikTok's versatility as a microlearning tool.

Moreover, TikTok is considered a platform for enhancing teachers' digital competence, offering both professional development opportunities and challenges. Thus, teachers are increasingly using TikTok to develop digital skills and innovative teaching approaches, to construct multifaceted professional identities, with studies revealing they can become more adaptive, expressive, and innovative (Ulla et al., 2024). However, the research also considerations (Lindra et al., 2024).

According to TikTok Creative Centre, approximately 2,000 posts with the hashtag #англійська, around 329 posts with #англійськамова, about 329 posts with #learnenglish, and nearly 1,000 posts with #learningenglish are published weekly in Ukraine. Thus, the data shows that TikTok is gradually becoming popular with Ukrainian teachers who are eager to grow professionally and develop their digital methodological creativity.

cautions about potential risks, such as inappropriate content creation and the need for ethical Thus, the relevance of the study is determined by a certain research gap: most studies focus on students, while the teacher as a digital content creator remains underexplored. Besides, little research has been done to explore how Ukrainian EFL teachers utilise the TikTok platform to develop their digital competence.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this research is to identify the pedagogical purposes, content formats, and levels of digital competence demonstrated in Ukrainian teacher-generated TikTok videos and to reveal the specifics of educational content creation on TikTok.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study adopts a descriptive qualitative research design to investigate teachers' digital competence as demonstrated in TikTok videos. This approach is appropriate because it enables an in-depth exploration of how educators apply digital tools, strategies, and pedagogical techniques within a social media context. The research design involves analysing videos using a competency framework and interpreting the data. A descriptive analytical method is employed to examine teacher-generated content and how teachers integrate digital literacy and innovative teaching practices.

The researchers conducted a content analysis of 111 TikTok videos created by Ukrainian teachers. To verify authorship, the researchers examined the creators' profile descriptions, usernames, and linguistic or contextual cues (such as Ukrainian captions or location tags). The selection criteria included public availability on TikTok, posting within the one-week observation period, at least one relevant hashtag, such as #викладачанглійської, #вчительанглійської, #англійська, #викладанняанглійської, #англійська мова, and clear audio-visual quality suitable for categorisation.

Data were collected directly through the TikTok interface using a structured observation checklist as the primary research instrument. The checklist helped classify videos according to specific dimensions of digital competence, including pedagogical purpose, video format, and content creation skills.

To support the quality, accuracy, and transparency of the research process, several digital tools were employed. TikTok Creative Center was used to identify relevant educational hashtags, analyse video trends, and estimate the popularity of English-language teaching content among Ukrainian creators. Elicit, an AI-assisted academic research platform, facilitated the discovery and organisation of recent scholarly sources related to digital pedagogy, microlearning, and teacher digital competence, ensuring that the literature review was comprehensive and up to date. Grammarly was applied in the final stages of manuscript preparation to refine the linguistic clarity, grammar, and academic tone of the text. All tools were used ethically to enhance the rigour and presentation of the study; the authors maintained full responsibility for data interpretation, analytical decisions, and conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The videos were classified according to their pedagogical purpose, format, and the teachers' level of digital competence.

In terms of pedagogical purpose, five main groups were identified: *instructional/educational* videos, which included grammar or vocabulary explanations, pronunciation tips, mini-

lessons, and examples of common mistakes; *motivational/inspirational* videos, such as “how not to be afraid to speak English,” success stories, motivational quotes, calls to action, and lesson extracts; *informative/awareness-raising* videos, featuring educational news, digital tools for teachers, and professional advice; *reflective/personal* videos, focusing on teaching experiences, challenges, and humour from a teacher’s life; and *evaluative/analytical* videos, presenting the analysis of students’ mistakes or reactions to other educational content.

Based on format, the videos were divided into several types: *microlearning* (short 15–60-second explanations of one concept), *sketch/ short scene* (humorous or situational clips such as “Teacher vs Student”), *voice-over/ lip-sync* (using trending sounds or audio with educational subtitles), *screen tutorials* (demonstrations of digital tools like Quizlet, Canva, or ChatGPT), *reaction/duet/stitch* videos (where teachers commented on or added to others’ content or feedback), *interactive quizzes or tasks* (short challenges or comprehension checks), and *vlogs* (personal reflections, classroom moments, or teaching experiences).

Finally, the videos were classified by teachers’ digital competence into three levels: *basic*, involving simple use of trends and minimal editing; *intermediate*, featuring captions, effects, and basic editing; and *advanced*, demonstrating creative use of algorithms, EdTech tool integration, and audience analytics.

The study used three pie charts to present the results of analysing 111 teacher-generated TikTok videos. The first pie chart

(Fig.1) illustrates the distribution of different types of teacher-generated content on TikTok, analysed by their pedagogical purpose.

The data clearly show that reflective/personal content dominates the platform, accounting for 59% of all analysed posts. This suggests that teachers tend to use TikTok primarily as a space for self-expression, reflection, and sharing personal experiences related to teaching and learning, rather than as a purely instructional tool. Such content may include humorous sketches, “a day in the life” videos, or reflections on classroom challenges.

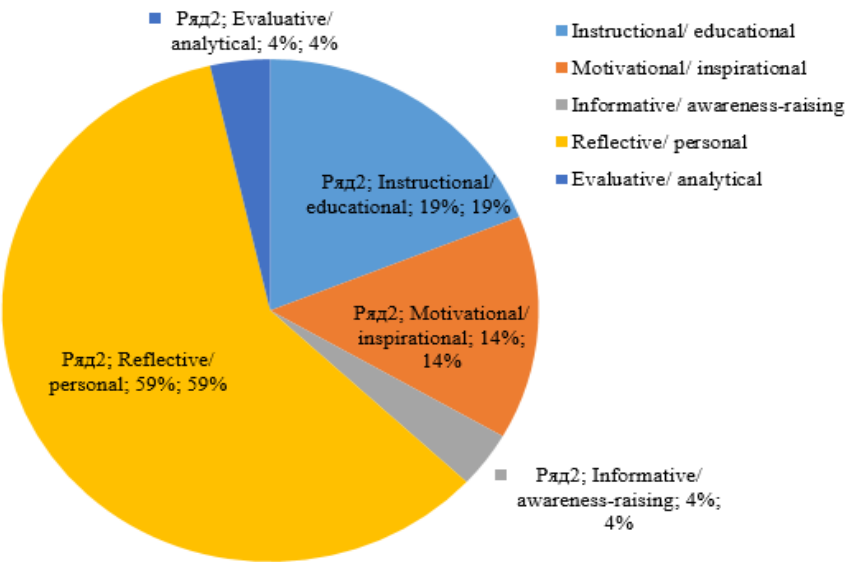


Figure 1. *Teacher-Generated Content on TikTok for Pedagogical Purposes*

The second most frequent category is instructional or educational content (19%), which typically includes short grammar explanations, vocabulary lessons, or pronunciation tips.

This indicates that a considerable number of educators still use TikTok for direct pedagogical purposes, adopting microlearning strategies suitable for short-form video formats.

Motivational or inspirational content represents 14%, showing that some teachers focus on encouraging learners or promoting positive attitudes toward language learning. Informative/awareness-raising and evaluative/analytical videos are less common (4% each), suggesting that sharing professional resources or critical reflections remains limited on this platform.

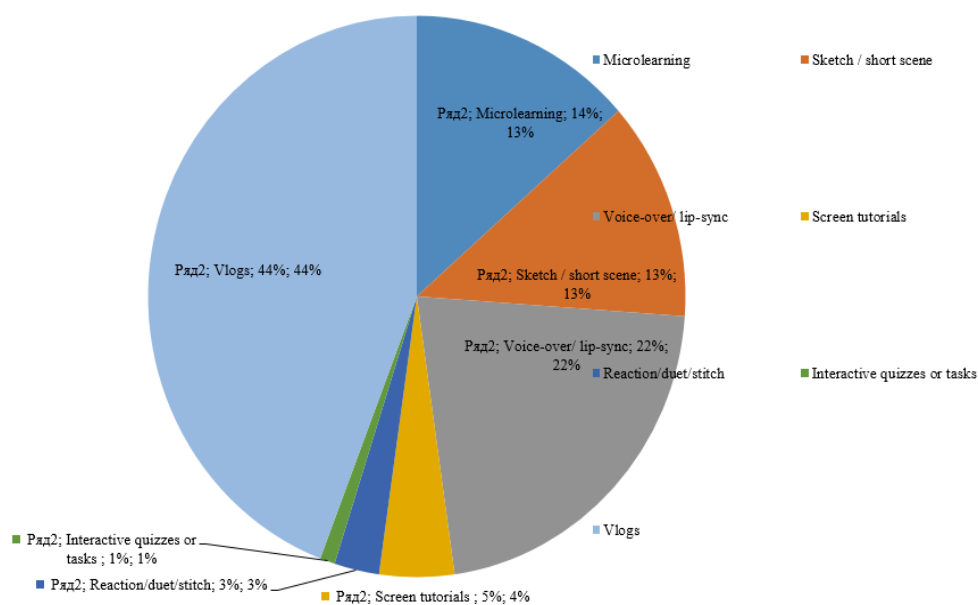


Figure 2. *Teacher-Generated Content on TikTok by Format*

The second pie chart (Fig.2) illustrates the distribution of formats used by Ukrainian educators in their English-teaching TikTok content. The most common format is vlogs (44%), indicating that many teachers prefer to share personal insights, classroom

experiences, or reflections rather than strictly instructional materials. This trend reflects TikTok’s social and performative nature, where authenticity and storytelling attract greater engagement.

Voice-over or lip-sync videos make up 22% of the content, showing that educators often use trending sounds or videos for linguistic commentary, pronunciation practice, or humorous explanations. Microlearning videos (14%) remain a significant portion, demonstrating teachers’ interest in concise, goal-oriented instruction suitable for short attention spans.

Sketches or short scenes (13%) are used creatively to simulate real-life communication or highlight common language mistakes. Screen tutorials (5%) and reaction/duet/stitch videos (3%) appear less frequently, suggesting that explicit digital instruction and interactive engagement are not yet widely adopted in teacher-generated content. Interactive quizzes or tasks account for only 1%, revealing limited use of assessment-oriented strategies on the platform.

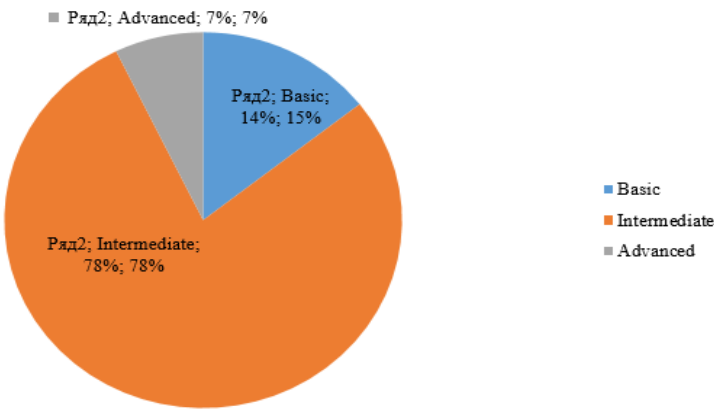


Figure 3. *Teacher-Generated Content on TikTok for Teachers’ Digital Competence*

The third pie chart (Fig.3) presents the distribution of TikTok videos created by teachers according to their level of digital competence. The results indicate that the majority of teacher-generated content (78%) falls within the intermediate level of digital competence. This means that most educators demonstrate a functional ability to use TikTok's core features, such as video editing, text overlays, and sound synchronization, without necessarily employing advanced editing tools or pedagogical design strategies.

A smaller portion (14%) of videos corresponds to the basic level, where teachers rely on minimal digital tools and limited interactivity. These videos often consist of direct-to-camera explanations or simple recordings with little post-production. Only 7% of the analysed content demonstrates an advanced level of digital competence, characterised by creative use of algorithms, EdTech tool integration, and audience analytics, professional editing, multimodal integration (text, visuals, and sound), and clear pedagogical structuring.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the findings highlight TikTok's dual function for teachers: it serves both as a social space for professional identity and emotional expression and as a pedagogical tool for microlearning and engagement. The predominance of reflective and personal posts implies that many educators use TikTok to humanise the teaching profession and connect with audiences

through relatable, authentic content. This finding is consistent with the observation that TikTok facilitates the construction of teacher identity in the digital sphere, allowing educators to merge professional expertise with personal storytelling (Ulla et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the smaller share of analytical or informative posts reflects the platform's entertainment-driven nature, where lighter, narrative-based content tends to attract more attention and engagement (Jerasa & Ura, 2025).

The data further suggest that TikTok functions primarily as a space for professional self-expression and informal learning rather than structured instruction. Teachers appear to integrate personal branding and relatable storytelling with educational aims, adapting their materials to fit the platform's fast-paced and visually oriented environment. However, the relatively low proportion of interactive or tutorial-based formats indicates potential for further pedagogical innovation, particularly in the areas of learner participation, formative assessment, and multimodal task design. These trends align with Meliana & Seli's (2023) findings, which demonstrate that TikTok-based microlearning can enhance engagement but often lacks systematic instructional depth. Expanding interactive components could therefore help educators leverage TikTok's participatory affordances for deeper and more sustainable language learning.

In addition, the predominance of intermediate-level digital competence among content creators suggests that while many teachers are confident users of social media technologies, they employ them in

a technically and pedagogically moderate way. This pattern mirrors broader trends in digital pedagogy, where educators tend to use social media tools for content delivery and engagement, but less frequently for innovation or critical learning design (Aydin, 2023). The relatively small proportion of advanced-level creators highlights the ongoing need for systematic professional development in digital competence, particularly in areas such as creative video production, data literacy, and media pedagogy. As Jerasa & Ura (2025) note, cultivating such competencies could enable teachers to transform TikTok from an informal sharing platform into a strategically integrated teaching environment that supports learner autonomy, multimodal literacy, and sustained engagement.

CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study confirms that TikTok serves as a dynamic platform for developing English teachers' digital competence and fostering innovative pedagogical practices. The content analysis of 111 teacher-generated videos demonstrated that educators use TikTok primarily for self-expression, professional identity formation, and informal microlearning rather than for systematic instruction. The predominance of reflective and vlog-style content highlights teachers' preference for authenticity, creativity, and emotional connection with their audience. At the same time, the widespread use of intermediate-level digital skills suggests that teachers are confident in employing basic technological tools but often lack advanced knowledge of media

design, interactivity, and analytics. Consequently, TikTok can be viewed as an effective medium for practical digital literacy enhancement, enabling teachers to integrate pedagogical, communicative, and technological competencies in real-life contexts.

Further research should focus on the impact of TikTok-based teaching on students' engagement and learning outcomes, as well as on analysing gender, age, and institutional differences among teachers who integrate social media into language instruction. Such directions will contribute to a deeper understanding of TikTok's role in shaping digital pedagogy, teacher identity, and professional transformation within the Ukrainian and global educational contexts.

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ТІКТОК ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТ РОЗВИТКУ ЦИФРОВОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ ВИКЛАДАЧА АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

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У статті розглядається актуальне питання використання TikTok як платформи для розвитку цифрової компетентності вчителів англійської мови та створення ними освітнього контенту. Мета статті полягає у дослідженні педагогічних цілей, форматів контенту та рівнів цифрової компетентності, продемонстрованих у відео TikTok, створених викладачами англійської мови. Для аналізу відео, опублікованих з хештегами, пов'язаними з викладанням англійської мови, було застосовано описовий метод. На основі контрольного списку спостережень, розробленого на основі Європейської рамки цифрової компетентності педагогів (DigCompEdu), відео були класифіковані відповідно до їх педагогічної мети, формату та технологічної складності. Результати свідчать, що переважає рефлексивний і персональний контент, що вказує на тенденцію викладачів використовувати TikTok переважно для професійного самовираження та неформального навчання, а не для структурованого викладання. Виявлено, що домінуючим форматом є влоги, що відображає перевагу викладачів до автентичного, оповідного стилю комунікації, який надає людського виміру професійній діяльності вчителя. Зазначено, що більшість авторів демонструють середній рівень цифрової компетентності, упевнено користуючись базовими функціями платформи, але рідко застосовуючи розширене редагування або алгоритми штучного інтелекту. На основі вивчених даних та аналізу зроблені висновки, що TikTok сприяє розвитку цифрової, комунікативної та творчої компетентностей викладачів, проте його інтерактивний і

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оцінювальний потенціал залишається недостатньо використаним. У статті підкреслено необхідність цілеспрямованого професійного розвитку, який допоможе педагогам перетворити соціальні медіа на стратегічне середовище для інноваційного навчання та зростання цифрової грамотності.

Ключові слова: створення контенту; цифрова компетентність; вчителі англійської мови; мікронавчання; TikTok.

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